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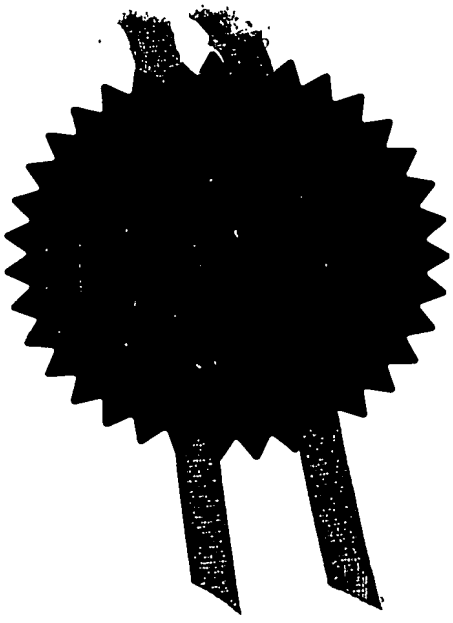

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12AUG03 E829246-1 D01038
P01/7700 0.00-0318768.9

1. Your reference	JPD/P304715GB/5048	0318768.9
2. Patent application number *(The Patent Office will fill in this part)*	11 AUG 2003	0318768.9
3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant *(underline all surnames)*	McBRIDE, Paul 25 Wall Road Reawla Cornwall TR27 5HA United Kingdom	HOCKIN, Richard Lilac Cottage 4 Chapel Road Leedstown Cornwall TR27 6BA United Kingdom
Patents ADP number *(if you know it)*	8697470001	8689762001
If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation		
4. Title of the invention	Device for Covering the Eyes	
5. Name of your agent *(if you have one)* "Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent *(including the postcode)*	WITHERS & ROGERS Goldings House 2 Hays Lane London SE1 2HW	
Patents ADP number *(if you know it)*	1776001	

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7. If this application is divided or otherwise derived from an earlier UK application, give the number and the filing date of the earlier application	Number of earlier application	Date of filing *(day / month / year)*

8. Is a statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a patent required in support of this request? *(Answer 'Yes' if:*
a) any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or
b) there is an inventor who is not named as an applicant, or
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Claim(s)	5
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11. I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

Signature [signature] Date 08/08/2003

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom — John Dean 0117 925 3030

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P304715GB

Device for Covering the Eyes

This invention relates to a device for covering the eyes particularly, though not exclusively, for use in watersports such as swimming.

Swimming is a popular form of recreation throughout the world, many people daily going swimming to keep fit, train for or participate in competition, or simply to have fun. The equipment needed to conduct this sport is inexpensive in contrast to some other sports.

Swimming goggles and masks are used by many swimmers to provide clear vision for the wearer and to help prevent water contacting the eyes, which may be affected by water additives such as chlorine. Due to the awkward shape of the face, the design of such equipment has been constrained to the well-known traditional swimming goggles, which provide two small individual lenses to fit around each eye socket and diving masks, which provide a single visor encompassing the whole region of both eyes. Each design has its own advantages but also limitations.

Diving masks improve visibility and provide a watertight seal but are cumbersome and produce too much drag for use whilst swimming at speed. "Seal Mask" (Aqua Sphere, Vista, California, USA) is a more hydrodynamically shaped mask, designed for triathletes who require improved visibility from a mask resistant to being kicked or pulled off during races. However it is still relatively cumbersome compared to the swimming goggles used by speed swimmers. Such goggles are more streamlined but cannot be worn whilst scuba diving because of the pressure generated around the eye socket and reduced visibility compared to a diving mask. In addition, many wearers find that swimming goggles do not provide an adequate seal, allowing leakage into the goggles. As a result of contact with the water, the eyes can become irritated and may also be infected with conditions such as *purpura gogglorum*, an infection which can result in permanent damage to the eye, including loss of sight.

An example of swimming goggles of the traditional design is described in United States patent US-A-6079054. In this patent the lenses, nose bridge and seals are of unitary construction and are held in position on the wearer's head by an elastic strap.

British patent application GB-A-2326078 relates to swimming goggles mounted directly on a swimming cap. The goggles are held in position on the wearer's face by means of the swimming cap stretching to cover both the wearer's head and goggles. The aim of the construction shown in the application is to reduce the internal misting of goggles experienced by some users. The specification does not address the problem of goggle leakage.

European patent application EP-A-1180383 relates to modifications in the design of the traditional swimming goggle in an attempt to improve the seal between the wearer's face and the goggles. The applicant has varied features of the parts of the goggles which make contact with the wearer's face. The invention represents a variation on the design of the traditional goggle style.

According to a first aspect of the invention there is provided a device comprising a first sheet of transparent elastic material which, in use, is stretched to extend around a wearer's head to sealingly cover the wearer's eyes and nose, the device including a moulded nose region shaped such that the device can fit around the wearer's nose. The sheet may be of silicone rubber composition. Preferably, the sheet will be made of the material known as MCP1300T (MCP Tooling Technologies Ltd, Stone, Staffordshire, UK), although other transparent silicone rubber materials may also be used.

It is an advantage of the current invention that the device fits over the eyes and nose of the wearer and encircles the head, making contact with the skin around the forehead, above the mouth and, in at least some embodiments, at the sides of the face in front of the ears. This, coupled with the use of elastic material, generates an improved seal over currently available goggles. In addition, the increased pressure around the eye, associated with the use of goggles as a result of the positioning of goggles in the eye socket, is not a factor in the use of the current invention. This invention represents a completely new approach to

solving the problem of designing a device which will cover the wearer's eyes and prevent water making contact with the eyes.

The thickness of the first sheet may preferably be increased in the moulded nose region. The increased thickness of the first sheet around the nose mould has the result that the material forming the nose mould stretches less than the material forming the main body of the sheet under any given tension. This, coupled with the moulded shape of this part of the device, has the advantageous effect that the device can be positioned on the wearer's head without the uncomfortable deformation of the wearer's nose.

The material of the moulded nose region may define at least one aperture which, in use, allows a wearer to breathe through the nose.

The device has an upper edge which may make sealing contact with a wearer's forehead and preferably may also make sealing contact with the wearer's head above the ears. Most preferably the upper edge of the device will make sealing contact with both of these parts of the wearer's head.

The device has a lower edge which may make sealing contact with a wearer's face between the nose and mouth and preferably may also make sealing contact with the wearer's face across the cheeks and/or with the wearer's head under the ears. Most preferably the lower edge of the device will make sealing contact with all of these parts of the wearer's head.

The material of the device may make a sealing contact with the side of a wearer's face in front of the ears.

Most preferably, the material of the device will make sealing contact with all of the above-mentioned parts of a wearer's head.

The device may comprise arms which form cut-outs in the elastic sheet such that, in use, the wearer's ears are not covered. Preferably, the arms are arranged such that at least one arm extends around a wearer's head above each ear and at least one arm extends around the

head below each ear. The device may form a band which, in use, encircles a wearer's head. Alternatively, the arms may be releasably fastened together by fastening means. The fastening means preferably comprises a hook and loop fastening material, more preferably Velcro®.

In a further embodiment, the device further comprises a second sheet, the second sheet being fixed as a layer on the first sheet and defining an aperture such that, in use, the wearer's eyes are not covered by the second sheet. The second sheet may be non-transparent. The second sheet may be an elastic material, preferably a silicone rubber composition. The second sheet may be a breathable material. The first and second sheets may be fixed together by adhesive. In the case that the first and second sheets are both of silicon rubber composition, they may be fixed together by silicone glue.

According to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided a device comprising a first sheet of elastic material which, in use, is stretched to extend around a wearer's head to sealingly cover the wearer's eyes and nose, the device further comprising: a moulded nose region shaped such that the device can fit around the wearer's nose; an aperture defined by the first sheet such that, in use, the wearer's eyes are not covered by the first sheet; and a transparent second sheet which is fixed to the first sheet such that the second sheet covers the aperture defined by the first sheet. The second sheet may be an elastic material. The first sheet may be non-transparent. At least one of the sheets of elastic material may be a silicone rubber material. The second sheet may preferably be MCP1300T. The first sheet of elastic material may be a breathable material. The first and second sheets may be fixed together by adhesive. In the case that the first and second sheets are both of silicone rubber composition, they may be fixed together by silicone glue.

The thickness of the first sheet may preferably be increased in the moulded nose region. The increased thickness of the first sheet around the nose mould has the result that the material forming the nose mould stretches less than the material forming the main body of the sheet under any given tension. This, coupled with the moulded shape of this part of the device, has the advantageous effect that the device can be positioned on the wearer's head without the uncomfortable deformation of the wearer's nose.

The material of the moulded nose region may define at least one aperture which, in use, allows a wearer to breathe through the nose.

The device has an upper edge which may make sealing contact with a wearer's forehead and preferably may also make sealing contact with the wearer's head above the ears. More preferably, the upper edge of the device will make sealing contact with both of these parts of the wearer's head.

The device has a lower edge which may make sealing contact with a wearer's face between the nose and mouth and preferably may also make sealing contact with the wearer's face across the cheeks and/or with the wearer's head under the ears. More preferably, the lower edge of the device will make sealing contact with all of these parts of the wearer's head.

The material of the device may make a sealing contact with the side of a wearer's face in front of the ears.

Most preferably, the material of the device will make sealing contact with all of the above-mentioned parts of a wearer's head.

The device may comprise arms which form cut-outs in the elastic sheet such that, in use, the wearer's ears are not covered. Preferably, the arms are arranged such that at least one arm extends around a wearer's head above each ear and at least one arm extends around the head below each ear. The device may form a band which, in use, encircles a wearer's head. Alternatively, the arms may be releasably fastened together by fastening means. The fastening means preferably comprises a hook and loop fastening material, more preferably Velcro®.

According to a third aspect of the invention there is provided a swimming mask in the form of a device according to the invention.

A further advantage of a device according to the invention is that it offers improved streamlining compared with traditional goggles and diving masks and may therefore be particularly useful for competitive swimmers.

In addition, personal, advertising or sponsorship logos and/or slogans may be applied to the device. Such opportunities are limited in the case of traditional goggles due to the small surface area of the straps which hold the goggles against the wearer's face.

Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying Figures 1 to 15 in which:

Figures 1A and B show plan views of component sheets of an embodiment of a device according to the invention;

Figure 2 shows a cross-section of a device according to the invention along the line A-A;

Figure 3 shows the component sheets of an embodiment of a device according to the invention;

Figure 4 shows a plan view of an embodiment of a device according to the invention, with a first transparent and second non-transparent sheet fixed together;

Figure 5 shows a cross-section of a device according to the invention along the line B-B;

Figure 6 shows an elevation of an embodiment of a device according to the invention in position on the wearer;

Figure 7 shows a side view of an embodiment of a device according to the invention in position on the wearer;

Figure 8 shows a rear view of an embodiment of a device according to the invention in position on the wearer;

Figure 9 shows a rear view of an alternative embodiment of a device according to the invention in position on the wearer;

Figure 10 shows a plan view of an embodiment of a device according to the invention, with a first transparent and second non-transparent sheet fixed together;

Figure 11 shows a cross-section of a device according to the invention along the line C-C;

Figure 12 shows a side view of an embodiment of a device according to the invention in position on the wearer;

Figure 13 shows a plan view of an embodiment of a device according to the invention;

Figure 14 shows a cross-section of a device according to the invention along the line D-D; and

Figure 15 shows an elevation of an embodiment of a device according to the invention in position on the wearer.

Figure 1A shows a transparent first elastic sheet (1) which may be a transparent silicone rubber material such as MCP1300T. The sheet comprises a main body portion (10) and arms (15) which define cut-outs (5), having edges (6).

Figure 1B shows a second, typically non-transparent, elastic sheet (20) which may, in some embodiments, form a component part of a device according to the invention. The second sheet may be a silicone rubber material as used for swimming caps. Similarly to the first sheet, the second sheet comprises a main body portion (40) and arms (22) which define cut-outs (7), having edges (8). An aperture (25) is formed in the second sheet, comprising two eye spaces (26, 27) which define a moulded nose region (30).

Figure 2 shows the moulded shape of the device in the nose region. The thickness (shown between arrows S-S) of the sheet at the moulded nose region (30) is greater than the thickness (shown between the arrows T-T) of the sheet at the edges (8) of the cut-outs formed by the arms.

Figure 3 shows how the first (1) and second (20) sheets may be layered together such that the cut-outs of each sheet (5, 7) are aligned. The sheets may be fixed together using, for example, silicone glue, or another suitable adhesive, or other means for joining the sheets. Figure 4 shows a plan view of a device constructed in this way. The first (1) and second (20) sheets are layered together. The alignment of the cut-outs of each sheet results in cut-outs (41) formed in the assembled device, the cut-outs having edges (35). The alignment of the arms of each sheet creates layered arms (42). The device resulting from the layering of the first and second sheets is a generally non-transparent device with a transparent aperture (25), through which the wearer is able to see when the device is in use, comprising two eye spaces (26, 27) which define a moulded nose region (30). The device has an upper edge (45) and a lower edge (50). Advertising and/or sponsorship logos may appear on the material forming the arms (42) or the main body (40) of the device. Such logos may, for example, be printed onto the second sheet.

Figure 5 shows the moulded shape of the nose region of the device illustrated in Figure 4. The first (1) and second (20) sheets are layered together. The thickness (shown between arrows U-U) of the second sheet (20) at the moulded nose region (30) is greater than the thickness (shown between arrows V-V) of the sheet at the edges (35) of the cut-outs formed by the arms. The first sheet (1) is layered on the inner surface of the second sheet (20). The increased thickness of the second sheet around the nose mould has the result that the material forming the nose mould stretches less than the material forming the main body of the sheet under any given tension. This, coupled with the moulded shape of this part of the device, has the advantageous effect that the device can be positioned on the wearer's head without the uncomfortable deformation of the wearer's nose. The thickness of the first sheet may also be varied in a similar manner, instead of or in addition to any variation in thickness of the second sheet.

Means may be provided, for example in the form of one or more apertures in the nose region to allow the wearer to inhale or exhale through the nose. In one embodiment the means may provide for exhalation only, for example by inclusion of a suitable valve mechanism.

Figures 6 and 7 show a front and side view of a device according to the invention in use, positioned on the wearer's head. The upper edge (45) of the device is positioned across the forehead and the lower edge (50) is positioned across the face between the wearer's nose and mouth. The moulded nose region (30) sits over the wearer's nose. The contact made with the wearer's head by the device at the upper (45) and lower (50) edges and at the edges (35) of the cut-outs (41) of the device, as the device is stretched to extend around the wearer's head, creates a seal such that water does not make contact with the wearer's eyes. The cut-outs (41) allow the device to be positioned on the wearer's head without covering the ears. The aperture (25) in the typically non-transparent second sheet allows the wearer to see through the transparent first sheet. Arms (42) can be seen in Figure 7 to stretch around the wearer's head to meet at a rear band (55). In the embodiment of the invention illustrated in Figure 8, a rear view of a device according to the invention in use, positioned on a wearer's head, the arms (42) can be seen to be continuous with the rear band (55).

Alternatively, the arms (42) may have ends which can be releasably fastened together in use with fastening means. Figure 9 shows a rear view of a device according to the invention positioned on a wearer's head, with ends (60, 65) of the arms (42) dividing the rear band. One end (65) is separated from the other (60) and folded back to reveal fastening means (70), for example, a hook and loop fastening material such as Velcro®.

In an alternative embodiment of the device, the device does not comprise arms. A plan view of a device according to this embodiment of the invention is shown in Figure 10. A first transparent sheet (1) and a second, typically non-transparent sheet (20), are layered together. The sheets may be fixed together using, for example, silicone glue, or another suitable adhesive, or other means for joining the sheets.. The device resulting from the layering of the first and second sheets is a generally non-transparent device with a transparent aperture (25), formed in the main body (40) of the device through which the

wearer is able to see when the device is in use, the aperture comprising two eye spaces (26, 27) which define a moulded nose region (30). The device has an upper edge (45) and a lower edge (50).

Figure 11 shows the moulded shape of the nose region of the device illustrated in Figure 10. The first (1) and second (20) sheets are layered together. The thickness (shown between the arrows W-W) of the second sheet (20) at the moulded nose region (30) is greater than the thickness (shown between arrows X-X) of the main body of the device.

Figure 12 shows a side view of a device according to the embodiment of the invention illustrated in Figure 10 in use, positioned on the wearer's head. The upper edge (45) of the device is positioned across the forehead and the lower edge (50) is positioned across the wearer's face between the wearer's nose and mouth. The moulded nose region (30) sits over the wearer's nose. The contact made with the wearer's head by the device at the upper (45) and lower (50) edges of the device and by the main body of the device, as the device is stretched to extend around the wearer's head, creates a seal such that water does not make contact with the wearer's eyes. The aperture (25) in the typically non-transparent second sheet allows the wearer to see through the transparent first sheet.

The device may, in an alternative embodiment, be formed from a single transparent sheet. Figure 13 shows a plan view of a device according to this embodiment of the invention. A transparent sheet (1) comprises a main body portion (10) and arms (15) which define cut-outs (5) having edges (6). A moulded nose region (30) is formed in the body portion of the device. The device has an upper edge (45) and a lower edge (50).

Figure 14 shows the moulded shape of the nose region of the device illustrated in Figure 13. The thickness (shown between arrows Y-Y) of the sheet (1) at the moulded nose region (30) is greater than the thickness (shown between arrows Z-Z) of the sheet at the edges (6) of the cut-outs formed by the arms of the device.

Figure 15 shows a front view of a device according to the invention in use, positioned on the wearer's head. The upper edge (45) of the device is positioned across the forehead and

the lower edge (50) is positioned across the face between the wearer's nose and mouth. The moulded nose region (30) sits over the wearer's nose. The contact made with the wearer's head by the device at the upper (45) and lower (50) edges and at the edges (6) of the cut-outs (5) of the device, as the device is stretched to extend around the wearer's head, creates a seal such that water does not make contact with the wearer's eyes. The cut-outs (5) allow the device to be positioned on the wearer's head without covering the ears. Arms (15) stretch around the wearer's head to meet at the back of the head, in a single rear band or at ends which may be releasably fastened by fastening means, as discussed above.

The skilled person will understand that elements of the embodiments described above may be combined to form a device according to the invention. For example, a device comprising a single transparent sheet may be formed as illustrated in Figure 12, lacking arms which define cut-outs, such that the device, in use, covers the ears.

Claims

1. A device for covering the eyes comprising a first sheet of transparent elastic material which, in use, is stretched to extend around a wearer's head to sealingly cover the wearer's eyes and nose, the device including a moulded nose region shaped such that the device can fit around the wearer's nose.

2. A device according to claim 1, wherein the elastic material is a silicone rubber composition.

3. A device according to claim 2 wherein the elastic material is MCP1300T.

4. A device according to any preceding claim wherein the thickness of the elastic sheet is increased in the moulded nose region.

5. A device according to any preceding claim wherein the material of the moulded nose region defines at least one aperture which, in use, allows a wearer to breathe through the nose.

6. A device according to any preceding claim wherein the device has an upper edge which makes a sealing contact with a wearer's forehead.

7. A device according to any preceding claim wherein the device has an upper edge which makes a sealing contact with a wearer's head above the ears.

8. A device according to any preceding claim wherein the device has a lower edge which makes a sealing contact with a wearer's face between the nose and the mouth.

9. A device according to any preceding claim wherein the device has a lower edge which makes a sealing contact with a wearer's face across the cheeks.

10. A device according to any preceding claim wherein the device has a lower edge which makes a sealing contact with a wearer's head under the ears.

11. A device according to any preceding claim wherein the material of the device makes a sealing contact with the side of a wearer's face in front of the ears.

12. A device according to any preceding claim comprising arms which form cut-outs in the elastic sheet such that, in use, the wearer's ears are not covered.

13. A device according to claim 12 wherein the arms are arranged such that at least one arm extends around a wearer's head above each ear and at least one arm extends around the head below each ear.

14. A device according to any preceding claim wherein the device forms a band which, in use, encircles a wearer's head.

15. A device according to any of claims 1 to 13 wherein the arms are releasably fastened together by fastening means.

16. A device according to claim 15 wherein the fastening means comprises a hook and loop fastening material.

17. A device according to claim 16 wherein the hook and loop fastening material is Velcro®.

18. A device according to any preceding claim, further comprising a second sheet, the second sheet being fixed as a layer on the first sheet and defining an aperture such that, in use, the wearer's eyes are not covered by the second sheet.

19. A device according to claim 18 in wherein the second sheet is an elastic material.

20. A device according to claim 18 or 19 wherein the second sheet is non-transparent.

21. A device according to claim 18, 19 or 20 wherein the second sheet is a silicone rubber composition.

22. A device according to any of claims 18 to 21 wherein the second sheet of material is a breathable material.

23. A device according to any of claims 18 to 22 wherein the first and second sheets are fixed together by adhesive.

24. A device according to claim 23 wherein the first and second sheets are both of silicon rubber composition and are fixed together by silicone glue.

25. A device for covering the eyes comprising a first sheet of elastic material which, in use, is stretched to extend around a wearer's head to sealingly cover the wearer's eyes and nose, the device further comprising:
    a. a moulded nose region shaped such that the device can fit around the wearer's nose;
    b. an aperture defined by the first sheet such that, in use, the wearer's eyes are not covered by the first sheet; and
    c. a transparent second sheet which is fixed to the first sheet such that the second sheet covers the aperture defined by the first sheet.

26. A device according to claim 25 wherein the second sheet is an elastic material

27. A device according to claim 25 or 26 wherein the first sheet is non-transparent.

28. A device according to any of claims 25 to 27 wherein at least one of the sheets of elastic material is a silicone rubber material.

29. A device according to any of claims 25 to 28 wherein the second sheet of elastic material is MCP1300T.

30. A device according to any of claims 25 to 29 wherein the first sheet of elastic material is a breathable material.

31. A device according to any of claims 25 to 30 wherein the first and second sheets are fixed together by adhesive.

32. A device according to any of claims 25 to 31 wherein the first and second sheets are both of silicone rubber composition and are fixed together by silicone glue.

33. A device according to any of claims 25 to 32 wherein the thickness of the elastic sheet is increased in the moulded nose region.

34. A device according to any of claims 25 to 33 wherein the material of the moulded nose region defines at least one aperture which, in use, allows a wearer to breathe through the nose.

35. A device according to any of claims 25 to 34 wherein the device has an upper edge which makes a sealing contact with a wearer's forehead.

36. A device according to any of claims 25 to 35 wherein the device has an upper edge which makes a sealing contact with a wearer's head above the ears.

37. A device according to any of claims 25 to 36 wherein the device has a lower edge which makes a sealing contact with a wearer's face between the nose and the mouth.

38. A device according to any of claims 25 to 37 wherein the device has a lower edge which makes a sealing contact with a wearer's face across the cheeks.

39. A device according to any of claims 25 to 38 wherein the device has a lower edge which makes a sealing contact with a wearer's head under the ears.

40. A device according to any of claims 25 to 39 wherein the material of the device makes a further sealing contact with the side of a wearer's face in front of the ears.

41. A device according to any of claims 25 to 40 comprising arms which form cut-outs in the elastic sheet such that, in use, the wearer's ears are not covered.

42. A device according to claim 41 wherein the arms are arranged such that at least one arm extends around a wearer's head above each ear and at least one arm extends around the head below each ear.

43. A device according to any of claims 25 to 42 wherein the device forms a band which, in use, encircles a wearer's head.

44. A device according to any of claims 25 to 42 wherein the arms are releasably fastened together by fastening means.

45. A device according to claim 44 wherein the fastening means comprises a hook and loop fastening material.

46. A device according to claim 45 wherein the fastening means comprise Velcro®.

47. A swimming mask in the form of a device according to any preceding claim..

48. A device substantially as herein described and as illustrated in the accompanying figures 1-15.

ABSTRACT

Device for Covering the Eyes

A device for covering the eyes comprises a first sheet of transparent elastic material which, in use, is stretched to extend around a wearer's head to sealingly cover the wearer's eyes and nose, the device including a moulded nose region shaped such that the device can fit around the wearer's nose. The device is particularly suitable for use as a swimming mask.

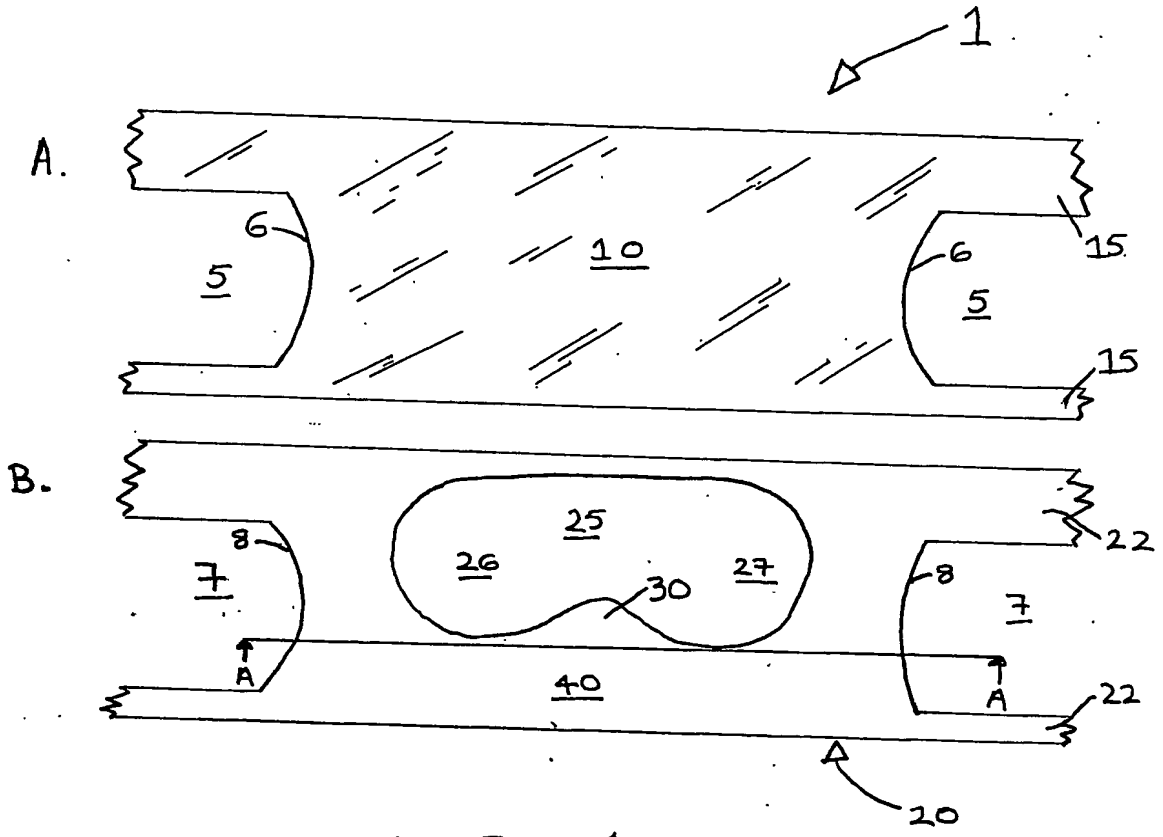

FIG 1

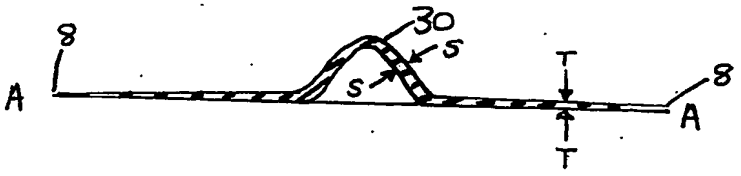

FIG 2

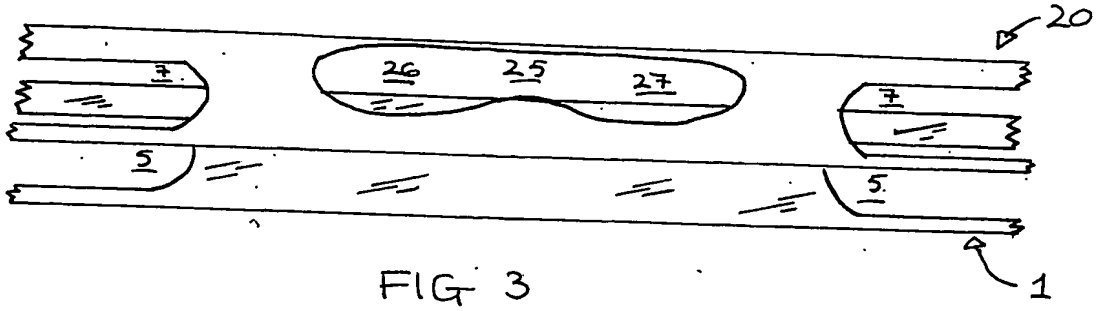

FIG 3

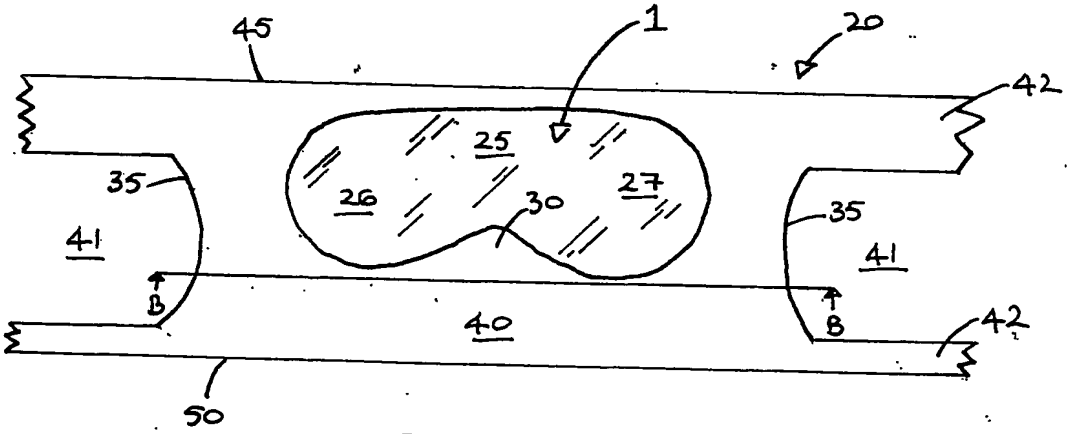

FIG 4

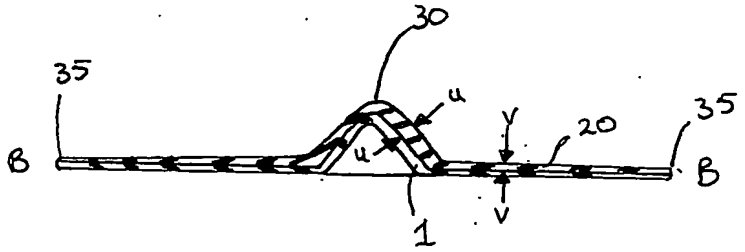

FIG 5

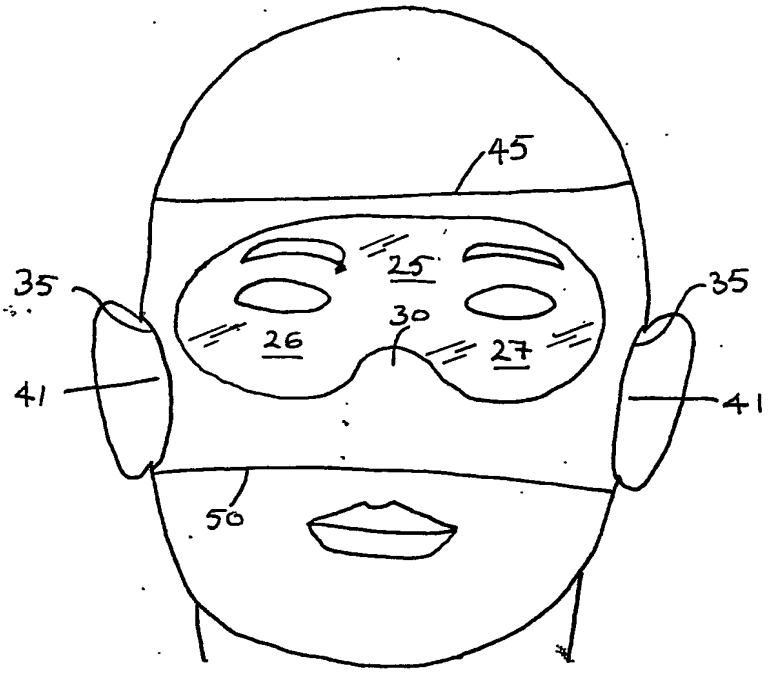

FIG 6

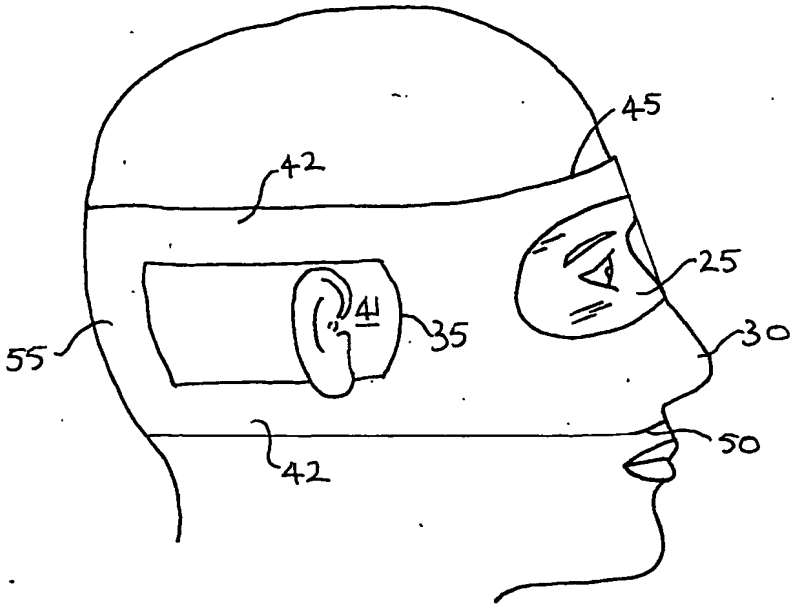

FIG 7

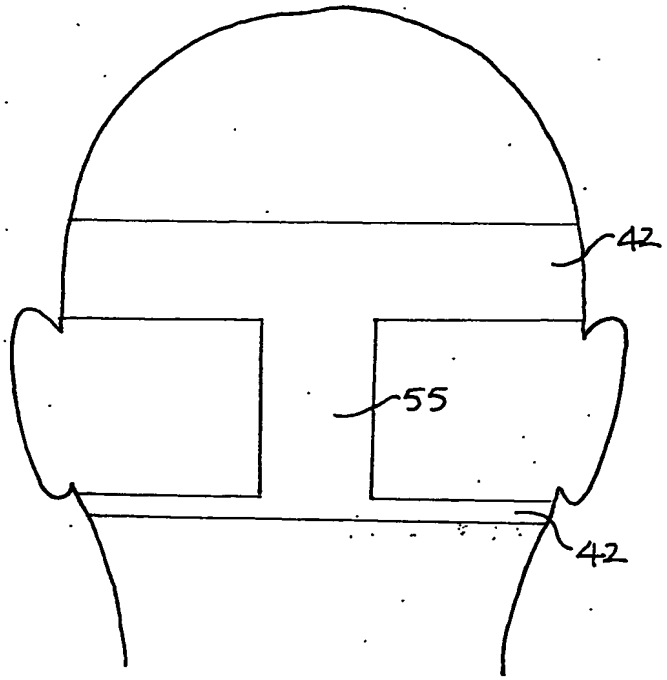

FIG 8

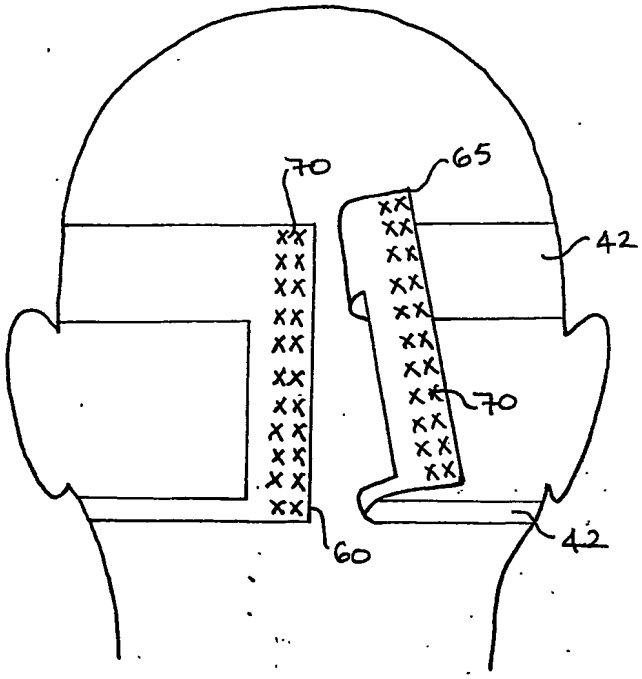

FIG 9

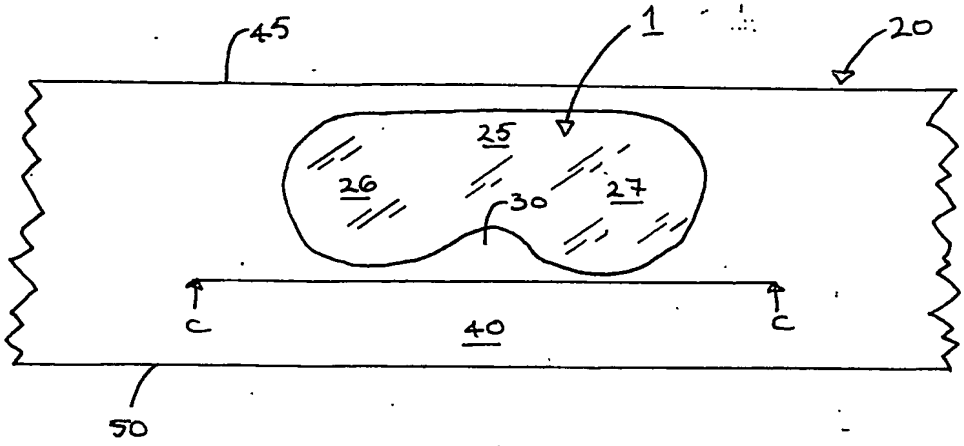

FIG 10

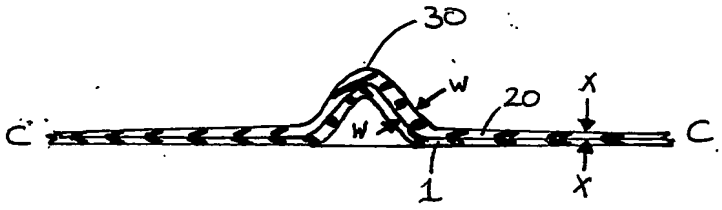

FIG 11

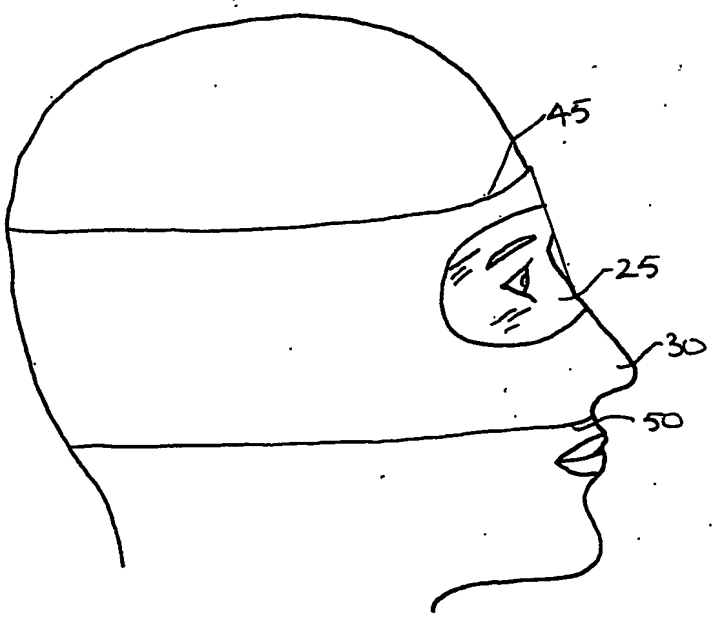

FIG 12

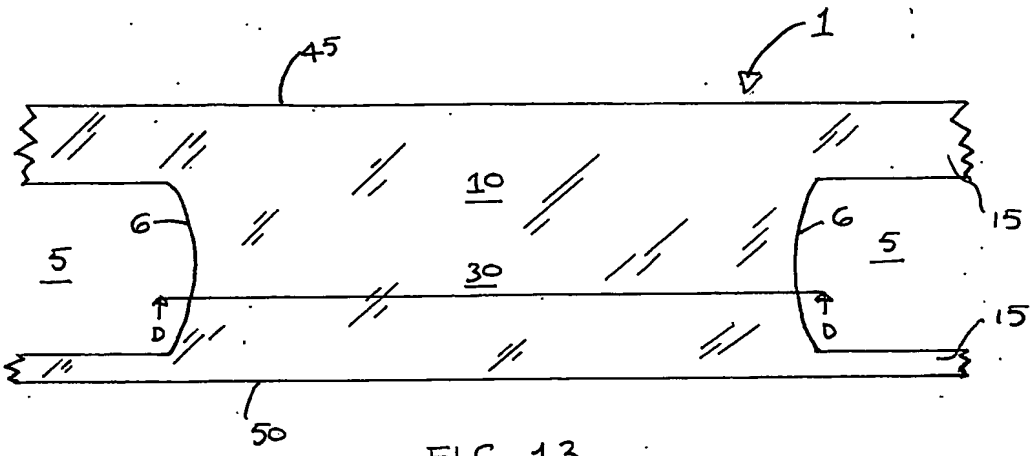

FIG 13

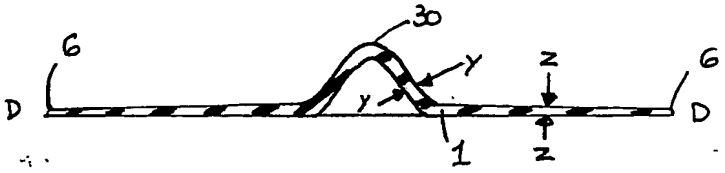

FIG 14

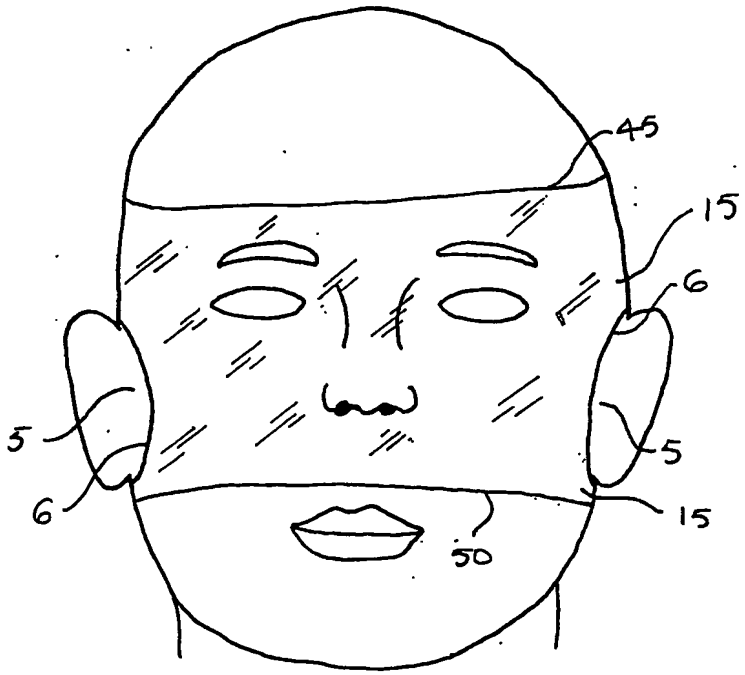

FIG 15